# Code of Ethics

AAMFT
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

## PREAMBLE

The Board of Directors of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) hereby promulgates, pursuant to Article 2, Section 2.01.3 of the Association's Bylaws, the Revised AAMFT Code of Ethics, effective January 1, 2015.

### Honoring Public Trust

The AAMFT strives to honor the public trust in marriage and family therapists by setting standards for ethical practice as described in this Code. The ethical standards define professional expectations and are enforced by the AAMFT Ethics Committee.

### Commitment to Service, Advocacy and Public Participation

Marriage and family therapists are defined by an enduring dedication to professional and ethical excellence, as well as the commitment to service, advocacy, and public participation. The areas of service, advocacy, and public participation are recognized as responsibilities to the profession equal in importance to all other aspects. Marriage and family therapists embody these aspirations by participating in activities that contribute to a better community and society, including devoting a portion of their professional activity to services for which there is little or no financial return. Additionally, marriage and family therapists are concerned with developing laws and regulations pertaining to marriage and family therapy that serve the public interest, and with altering such laws and regulations that are not in the public interest. Marriage and family therapists also encourage public participation in the design and delivery of professional services and in the regulation of practitioners. Professional competence in these areas is essential to the character of the field, and to the well-being of clients and their communities.

### Seeking Consultation

The absence of an explicit reference to a specific behavior or situation in the Code does not mean that the behavior is ethical or unethical. The standards are not exhaustive. Marriage and family therapists who are uncertain about the ethics of a particular course of action are encouraged to seek counsel from consultants, attorneys, supervisors, colleagues, or other appropriate authorities.

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## Ethical Decision-Making

Both law and ethics govern the practice of marriage and family therapy. When making decisions regarding professional behavior, marriage and family therapists must consider the AAMFT Code of Ethics and applicable laws and regulations. If the AAMFT Code of Ethics prescribes a standard higher than that required by law, marriage and family therapists must meet the higher standard of the AAMFT Code of Ethics. Marriage and family therapists comply with the mandates of law, but make known their commitment to the AAMFT Code of Ethics and take steps to resolve the conflict in a responsible manner. The AAMFT supports legal mandates for reporting of alleged unethical conduct.

Marriage and family therapists remain accountable to the AAMFT Code of Ethics when acting as members or employees of organizations. If the mandates of an organization with which a marriage and family therapist is affiliated, through employment, contract or otherwise, conflict with the AAMFT Code of Ethics, marriage and family therapists make known to the organization their commitment to the AAMFT Code of Ethics and take reasonable steps to resolve the conflict in a way that allows the fullest adherence to the Code of Ethics.

## Binding Expectations

The AAMFT Code of Ethics is binding on members of AAMFT in all membership categories, all AAMFT Approved Supervisors and all applicants for membership or the Approved Supervisor designation. AAMFT members have an obligation to be familiar with the AAMFT Code of Ethics and its application to their professional services. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not a defense to a charge of unethical conduct.

## Resolving Complaints

The process for filing, investigating, and resolving complaints of unethical conduct is described in the current AAMFT Procedures for Handling Ethical Matters. Persons accused are considered innocent by the Ethics Committee until proven guilty, except as otherwise provided, and are entitled to due process. If an AAMFT member resigns in anticipation of, or during the course of, an ethics investigation, the Ethics Committee will complete its investigation. Any publication of action taken by the Association will include the fact that the member attempted to resign during the investigation.

## Aspirational Core Values

The following core values speak generally to the membership of AAMFT as a professional association, yet they also inform all the varieties of practice and service in which marriage and family therapists engage. These core values are aspirational in nature, and are distinct from ethical standards. These values are intended to provide an aspirational framework within which marriage and family therapists may pursue the highest goals of practice.

The core values of AAMFT embody:

1. Acceptance, appreciation, and inclusion of a diverse membership.
2. Distinctiveness and excellence in training of marriage and family therapists and those desiring to advance their skills, knowledge and expertise in systemic and relational therapies.
3. Responsiveness and excellence in service to members.
4. Diversity, equity and excellence in clinical practice, research, education and administration.
5. Integrity evidenced by a high threshold of ethical and honest behavior within Association governance and by members.
6. Innovation and the advancement of knowledge of systemic and relational therapies.

## Ethical Standards

Ethical standards, by contrast, are rules of practice upon which the marriage and family therapist is obliged and judged. The introductory paragraph to each standard in the AAMFT Code of Ethics is an aspirational/explanatory orientation to the enforceable standards that follow.

## STANDARD I

### RESPONSIBILITY TO CLIENTS

*Marriage and family therapists advance the welfare of families and individuals and make reasonable efforts to find the appropriate balance between conflicting goals within the family system.*

**1.1 Non-Discrimination.** Marriage and family therapists provide professional assistance to persons without discrimination on the basis of race, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, gender, health status, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or relationship status.

**1.2 Informed Consent.** Marriage and family therapists obtain appropriate informed consent to therapy or related procedures and use language that is reasonably understandable to clients. When persons, due to age or mental status, are legally incapable of giving informed consent, marriage and family therapists obtain informed permission from a legally authorized person, if such substitute consent is legally permissible. The content of informed consent may vary depending upon the client and treatment plan; however, informed consent generally necessitates that the client: (a) has the capacity to consent; (b) has been adequately informed of significant information concerning treatment processes and procedures; (c) has been adequately informed of potential risks and benefits of treatments for which generally recognized standards do not yet exist; (d) has freely and without undue influence expressed consent; and (e) has provided consent that is appropriately documented.

**1.3 Multiple Relationships.** Marriage and family therapists are aware of their influential positions with respect to clients, and they avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. Therapists, therefore, make every effort to avoid conditions and multiple relationships with clients that could impair professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation. Such relationships include, but are not limited to, business or close personal relationships with a client or the client's immediate family. When the risk of impairment or exploitation exists due to conditions or multiple roles, therapists document the appropriate precautions taken.

**1.4 Sexual Intimacy with Current Clients and Others.** Sexual intimacy with current clients or with known members of the client's family system is prohibited.

**1.5 Sexual Intimacy with Former Clients and Others.** Sexual intimacy with former clients or with known members of the client's family system is prohibited.

**1.6 Reports of Unethical Conduct.** Marriage and family therapists comply with applicable laws regarding the reporting of alleged unethical conduct.

**1.7 Abuse of the Therapeutic Relationship.** Marriage and family therapists do not abuse their power in therapeutic relationships.

**1.8 Client Autonomy in Decision Making.** Marriage and family therapists respect the rights of clients to make decisions and help them to understand the consequences of these decisions. Therapists clearly advise clients that clients have the responsibility to make decisions regarding relationships such as cohabitation, marriage, divorce, separation, reconciliation, custody, and visitation.

**1.9 Relationship Beneficial to Client.** Marriage and family therapists continue therapeutic relationships only so long as it is reasonably clear that clients are benefiting from the relationship.

**1.10 Referrals.** Marriage and family therapists respectfully assist persons in obtaining appropriate therapeutic services if the therapist is unable or unwilling to provide professional help.

**1.11 Non-Abandonment.** Marriage and family therapists do not abandon or neglect clients in treatment without making reasonable arrangements for the continuation of treatment.

**1.12 Written Consent to Record.** Marriage and family therapists obtain written informed consent from clients before recording any images or audio or permitting third-party observation.

**1.13 Relationships with Third Parties.** Marriage and family therapists, upon agreeing to provide services to a person or entity at the request of a third party, clarify, to the extent feasible and at the outset of the service, the nature of the relationship with each party and the limits of confidentiality.

## STANDARD II

### CONFIDENTIALITY

*Marriage and family therapists have unique confidentiality concerns because the client in a therapeutic relationship may be more than one person. Therapists respect and guard the confidences of each individual client.*

**2.1 Disclosing Limits of Confidentiality.** Marriage and family therapists disclose to clients and other interested parties at the outset of services the nature of confidentiality and possible limitations of the clients' right to confidentiality. Therapists review with clients the circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. Circumstances may necessitate repeated disclosures.

**2.2 Written Authorization to Release Client Information.** Marriage and family therapists do not disclose client confidences except by written authorization or waiver, or where mandated or permitted by law. Verbal authorization will not be sufficient except in emergency situations, unless prohibited by law. When providing couple, family or group treatment, the therapist does not disclose information outside the treatment context without a written authorization from each individual competent to execute a waiver. In the context of couple, family or group treatment, the therapist may not reveal any individual's confidences to others in the client unit without the prior written permission of that individual.

**2.3 Client Access to Records.** Marriage and family therapists provide clients with reasonable access to records concerning the clients. When providing couple, family, or group treatment, the therapist does not provide access to records without a written authorization from each individual competent to execute a waiver. Marriage and family therapists limit client's access to their records only in exceptional circumstances when they are concerned, based on compelling evidence, that such access could cause serious harm to the client. The client's request and the rationale for withholding some or all of the record should be documented in the client's file. Marriage and family therapists take steps to protect the confidentiality of other individuals identified in client records.

**2.4 Confidentiality in Non-Clinical Activities.** Marriage and family therapists use client and/or clinical materials in teaching, writing, consulting, research, and public presentations only if a written waiver has been obtained in accordance with Standard 2.2, or when appropriate steps have been taken to protect client identity and confidentiality.

**2.5 Protection of Records.** Marriage and family therapists store, safeguard, and dispose of client records in ways that maintain confidentiality and in accord with applicable laws and professional standards.

**2.6 Preparation for Practice Changes.** In preparation for moving a practice, closing a practice, or death, marriage and family therapists arrange for the storage, transfer, or disposal of client records in conformance with applicable laws and in ways that maintain confidentiality and safeguard the welfare of clients.

**2.7 Confidentiality in Consultations.** Marriage and family therapists, when consulting with colleagues or referral sources, do not share confidential information that could reasonably lead to the identification of a client, research participant, supervisee, or other person with whom they have a confidential relationship unless they have obtained the prior written consent of the client, research participant, supervisee, or other person with whom they have a confidential relationship. Information may be shared only to the extent necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation.

## STANDARD III

### PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND INTEGRITY

*Marriage and family therapists maintain high standards of professional competence and integrity.*

**3.1 Maintenance of Competency.** Marriage and family therapists pursue knowledge of new developments and maintain their competence in marriage and family therapy through education, training, and/or supervised experience.

**3.2 Knowledge of Regulatory Standards.** Marriage and family therapists pursue appropriate consultation and training to ensure adequate knowledge of and adherence to applicable laws, ethics, and professional standards.

**3.3 Seek Assistance.** Marriage and family therapists seek appropriate professional assistance for issues that may impair work performance or clinical judgment.

**3.4 Conflicts of Interest.** Marriage and family therapists do not provide services that create a conflict of interest that may impair work performance or clinical judgment.

**3.5 Maintenance of Records.** Marriage and family therapists maintain accurate and adequate clinical and financial records in accordance with applicable law.

**3.6 Development of New Skills.** While developing new skills in specialty areas, marriage and family therapists take steps to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients from possible harm. Marriage and family therapists practice in specialty areas new to them only after appropriate education, training, and/or supervised experience.

**3.7 Harassment.** Marriage and family therapists do not engage in sexual or other forms of harassment of clients, students, trainees, supervisees, employees, colleagues, or research subjects.

**3.8 Exploitation.** Marriage and family therapists do not engage in the exploitation of clients, students, trainees, supervisees, employees, colleagues, or research subjects.

**3.9 Gifts.** Marriage and family therapists attend to cultural norms when considering whether to accept gifts from or give gifts to clients. Marriage and family therapists consider the potential effects that receiving or giving gifts may have on clients and on the integrity and efficacy of the therapeutic relationship.

**3.10 Scope of Competence.** Marriage and family therapists do not diagnose, treat, or advise on problems outside the recognized boundaries of their competencies.

**3.11 Public Statements.** Marriage and family therapists, because of their ability to influence and alter the lives of others, exercise special care when making public their professional recommendations and opinions through testimony or other public statements.

**3.12 Professional Misconduct.** Marriage and family therapists may be in violation of this Code and subject to termination of membership or other appropriate action if they: (a) are convicted of any felony; (b) are convicted of a misdemeanor related to their qualifications or functions; (c) engage in conduct which could lead to conviction of a felony, or a misdemeanor related to their qualifications or functions; (d) are expelled from or disciplined by other professional organizations; (e) have their licenses or certificates suspended or revoked or are otherwise disciplined by regulatory bodies; (f) continue to practice marriage and family therapy while no longer competent to do so because they are impaired by physical or mental causes or the abuse of alcohol or other substances; or (g) fail to cooperate with the Association at any point from the inception of an ethical complaint through the completion of all proceedings regarding that complaint.

## STANDARD IV

### RESPONSIBILITY TO STUDENTS AND SUPERVISEES

*Marriage and family therapists do not exploit the trust and dependency of students and supervisees.*

**4.1 Exploitation.** Marriage and family therapists who are in a supervisory role are aware of their influential positions with respect to students and supervisees, and they avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. Therapists, therefore, make every effort to avoid conditions and multiple relationships that could impair professional objectivity or increase the risk of exploitation. When the risk of impairment or exploitation exists due to conditions or multiple roles, therapists take appropriate precautions.

**4.2 Therapy with Students or Supervisees.** Marriage and family therapists do not provide therapy to current students or supervisees.

**4.3 Sexual Intimacy with Students or Supervisees.** Marriage and family therapists do not engage in sexual intimacy with students or supervisees during the evaluative or training relationship between the therapist and student or supervisee.

**4.4 Oversight of Supervisee Competence.** Marriage and family therapists do not permit students or supervisees to perform or to hold themselves out as competent to perform professional services beyond their training, level of experience, and competence.

**4.5 Oversight of Supervisee Professionalism.** Marriage and family therapists take reasonable measures to ensure that services provided by supervisees are professional.

**4.6 Existing Relationship with Students or Supervisees.** Marriage and family therapists are aware of their influential positions with respect to supervisees, and they avoid exploiting the trust and dependency of such persons. Supervisors, therefore, make every effort to avoid conditions and multiple relationships with supervisees that could impair professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation. Examples of such relationships include, but are not limited to, business or close personal relationships with supervisees or the supervisee's immediate family. When the risk of impairment or exploitation exists due to conditions or multiple roles, supervisors document the appropriate precautions taken.

**4.7 Confidentiality with Supervisees.** Marriage and family therapists do not disclose supervisee confidences except by written authorization or waiver, or when mandated or permitted by law. In educational or training settings where there are multiple supervisors, disclosures are permitted only to other professional colleagues, administrators, or employers who share responsibility for training of the supervisee. Verbal authorization will not be sufficient except in emergency situations, unless prohibited by law.

**4.8 Payment for Supervision.** Marriage and family therapists providing clinical supervision shall not enter into financial arrangements with supervisees through deceptive or exploitative practices, nor shall marriage and family therapists providing clinical supervision exert undue influence over supervisees when establishing supervision fees. Marriage and family therapists shall also not engage in other exploitative practices of supervisees.

## STANDARD V

### RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION

*Marriage and family therapists respect the dignity and protect the welfare of research participants, and are aware of applicable laws, regulations, and professional standards governing the conduct of research.*

**5.1 Institutional Approval.** When institutional approval is required, marriage and family therapists submit accurate information about their research proposals and obtain appropriate approval prior to conducting the research.

**5. 2 Protection of Research Participants.** Marriage and family therapists are responsible for making careful examinations of ethical acceptability in planning research. To the extent that services to research participants may be compromised by participation in research, marriage and family therapists seek the ethical advice of qualified professionals not directly involved in the investigation and observe safeguards to protect the rights of research participants.

**5. 3 Informed Consent to Research.** Marriage and family therapists inform participants about the purpose of the research, expected length, and research procedures. They also inform participants of the aspects of the research that might reasonably be expected to influence willingness to participate such as potential risks, discomforts, or adverse effects. Marriage and family therapists are especially sensitive to the possibility of diminished consent when participants are also receiving clinical services, or have impairments which limit understanding and/or communication, or when participants are children. Marriage and family therapists inform participants about any potential research benefits, the limits of confidentiality, and whom to contact concerning questions about the research and their rights as research participants.

**5.4 Right to Decline or Withdraw Participation.** Marriage and family therapists respect each participant's freedom to decline participation in or to withdraw from a research study at any time. This obligation requires special thought and consideration when investigators or other members of the research team are in positions of authority or influence over participants. Marriage and family therapists, therefore, make every effort to avoid multiple relationships with research participants that could impair professional judgment or increase the risk of exploitation. When offering inducements for research participation, marriage and family therapists make reasonable efforts to avoid offering inappropriate or excessive inducements when such inducements are likely to coerce participation.

**5.5 Confidentiality of Research Data.** Information obtained about a research participant during the course of an investigation is confidential unless there is a waiver previously obtained in writing. When the possibility exists that others, including family members, may obtain access to such information, this possibility, together with the plan for protecting confidentiality, is explained as part of the procedure for obtaining informed consent.

**5.6 Publication.** Marriage and family therapists do not fabricate research results. Marriage and family therapists disclose potential conflicts of interest and take authorship credit only for work they have performed or to which they have contributed. Publication credits accurately reflect the relative contributions of the individual involved.

**5.7 Authorship of Student Work.** Marriage and family therapists do not accept or require authorship credit for a publication based from student's research, unless the marriage and family therapist made a substantial contribution beyond being a faculty advisor or research committee member. Co-authorship on student research should be determined in accordance with principles of fairness and justice.

**5.8 Plagiarism.** Marriage and family therapists who are the authors of books or other materials that are published or distributed do not plagiarize or fail to cite persons to whom credit for original ideas or work is due.

**5.9 Accuracy in Publication.** Marriage and family therapists who are authors of books or other materials published or distributed by an organization take reasonable precautions to ensure that the published materials are accurate and factual.

## STANDARD VI

### TECHNOLOGY-ASSISTED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

*Therapy, supervision, and other professional services engaged in by marriage and family therapists take place over an increasing number of technological platforms. There are great benefits and responsibilities inherent in both the traditional therapeutic and supervision contexts, as well as in the utilization of technologically-assisted professional services. This standard addresses basic ethical requirements of offering therapy, supervision, and related professional services using electronic means.*

**6.1 Technology Assisted Services.** Prior to commencing therapy or supervision services through electronic means (including but not limited to phone and Internet), marriage and family therapists ensure that they are compliant with all relevant laws for the delivery of such services. Additionally, marriage and family therapists must: (a) determine that technologically-assisted services or supervision are appropriate for clients or supervisees, considering professional, intellectual, emotional, and physical needs; (b) inform clients or supervisees of the potential risks and benefits associated with technologically-assisted services; (c) ensure the security of their communication medium; and (d) only commence electronic therapy or supervision after appropriate education, training, or supervised experience using the relevant technology.

**6.2 Consent to Treat or Supervise.** Clients and supervisees, whether contracting for services as individuals, dyads, families, or groups, must be made aware of the risks and responsibilities associated with technology-assisted services. Therapists are to advise clients and supervisees in writing of these risks, and of both the therapist's and clients'/supervisees' responsibilities for minimizing such risks.

**6.3 Confidentiality and Professional Responsibilities.** It is the therapist's or supervisor's responsibility to choose technological platforms that adhere to standards of best practices related to confidentiality and quality of services, and that meet applicable laws. Clients and supervisees are to be made aware in writing of the limitations and protections offered by the therapist's or supervisor's technology.

**6.4 Technology and Documentation.** Therapists and supervisors are to ensure that all documentation containing identifying or otherwise sensitive information which is electronically stored and/or transferred is done using technology that adhere to standards of best practices related to confidentiality and quality of services, and that meet applicable laws. Clients and supervisees are to be made aware in writing of the limitations and protections offered by the therapist's or supervisor's technology.

**6.5 Location of Services and Practice.** Therapists and supervisors follow all applicable laws regarding location of practice and services, and do not use technologically-assisted means for practicing outside of their allowed jurisdictions.

**6.6 Training and Use of Current Technology.** Marriage and family therapists ensure that they are well trained and competent in the use of all chosen technology-assisted professional services. Careful choices of audio, video, and other options are made in order to optimize quality and security of services, and to adhere to standards of best practices for technology-assisted services. Furthermore, such choices of technology are to be suitably advanced and current so as to best serve the professional needs of clients and supervisees.

## STANDARD VII

### PROFESSIONAL EVALUATIONS

*Marriage and family therapists aspire to the highest of standards in providing testimony in various contexts within the legal system.*

**7.1 Performance of Forensic Services.** Marriage and family therapists may perform forensic services which may include interviews, consultations, evaluations, reports, and assessments both formal and informal, in keeping with applicable laws and competencies.

**7.2 Testimony in Legal Proceedings.** Marriage and family therapists who provide expert or fact witness testimony in legal proceedings avoid misleading judgments, base conclusions and opinions on appropriate data, and avoid inaccuracies insofar as possible. When offering testimony, as marriage and family therapy experts, they shall strive to be accurate, objective, fair, and independent.

**7.3 Competence.** Marriage and family therapists demonstrate competence via education and experience in providing testimony in legal systems.

**7.4 Informed Consent.** Marriage and family therapists provide written notice and make reasonable efforts to obtain written consents of persons who are the subject(s) of evaluations and inform clients about the evaluation process, use of information and recommendations, financial arrangements, and the role of the therapist within the legal system.

**7.5 Avoiding Conflicts.** Clear distinctions are made between therapy and evaluations. Marriage and family therapists avoid conflict in roles in legal proceedings wherever possible and disclose potential conflicts. As therapy begins, marriage and family therapists clarify roles and the extent of confidentiality when legal systems are involved.

**7.6 Avoiding Dual Roles.** Marriage and family therapists avoid providing therapy to clients for whom the therapist has provided a forensic evaluation and avoid providing evaluations for those who are clients, unless otherwise mandated by legal systems.

**7.7 Separation of Custody Evaluation from Therapy.** Marriage and family therapists avoid conflicts of interest in treating minors or adults involved in custody or visitation actions by not performing evaluations for custody, residence, or visitation of the minor. Marriage and family therapists who treat minors may provide the court or mental health professional performing the evaluation with information about the minor from the marriage and family therapist's perspective as a treating marriage and family therapist, so long as the marriage and family therapist obtains appropriate consents to release information.

**7.8 Professional Opinions.** Marriage and family therapists who provide forensic evaluations avoid offering professional opinions about persons they have not directly interviewed. Marriage and family therapists declare the limits of their competencies and information.

**7.9 Changes in Service.** Clients are informed if changes in the role of provision of services of marriage and family therapy occur and/or are mandated by a legal system.

**7.10 Familiarity with Rules.** Marriage and family therapists who provide forensic evaluations are familiar with judicial and/or administrative rules prescribing their roles.

## STANDARD VIII

### FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

*Marriage and family therapists make financial arrangements with clients, third-party payors, and supervisees that are reasonably understandable and conform to accepted professional practices.*

**8.1 Financial Integrity.** Marriage and family therapists do not offer or accept kickbacks, rebates, bonuses, or other remuneration for referrals. Fee-for-service arrangements are not prohibited.

**8.2 Disclosure of Financial Policies.** Prior to entering into the therapeutic or supervisory relationship, marriage and family therapists clearly disclose and explain to clients and supervisees: (a) all financial arrangements and fees related to professional services, including charges for canceled or missed appointments; (b) the use of collection agencies or legal measures for nonpayment; and (c) the procedure for obtaining payment from the client, to the extent allowed by law, if payment is denied by the third-party payor. Once services have begun, therapists provide reasonable notice of any changes in fees or other charges.

**8.3 Notice of Payment Recovery Procedures.** Marriage and family therapists give reasonable notice to clients with unpaid balances of their intent to seek collection by agency or legal recourse. When such action is taken, therapists will not disclose clinical information.

**8.4 Truthful Representation of Services.** Marriage and family therapists represent facts truthfully to clients, third-party payors, and supervisees regarding services rendered.

**8.5 Bartering.** Marriage and family therapists ordinarily refrain from accepting goods and services from clients in return for services rendered. Bartering for professional services may be conducted only if: (a) the supervisee or client requests it; (b) the relationship is not exploitative; (c) the professional relationship is not distorted; and (d) a clear written contract is established.

**8.6 Withholding Records for Non-Payment.** Marriage and family therapists may not withhold records under their immediate control that are requested and needed for a client's treatment solely because payment has not been received for past services, except as otherwise provided by law.

## STANDARD IX

### ADVERTISING

*Marriage and family therapists engage in appropriate informational activities, including those that enable the public, referral sources, or others to choose professional services on an informed basis.*

**9.1 Accurate Professional Representation.** Marriage and family therapists accurately represent their competencies, education, training, and experience relevant to their practice of marriage and family therapy in accordance with applicable law.

**9.2 Promotional Materials.** Marriage and family therapists ensure that advertisements and publications in any media are true, accurate, and in accordance with applicable law.

**9.3 Professional Affiliations.** Marriage and family therapists do not hold themselves out as being partners or associates of a firm if they are not.

**9.4 Professional Identification.** Marriage and family therapists do not use any professional identification (such as a business card, office sign, letterhead, Internet, or telephone or association directory listing) if it includes a statement or claim that is false, fraudulent, misleading, or deceptive.

**9.5 Educational Credentials.** Marriage and family therapists claim degrees for their clinical services only if those degrees demonstrate training and education in marriage and family therapy or related fields.

**9.6 Employee or Supervisee Qualifications.** Marriage and family therapists make certain that the qualifications of their employees and supervisees are represented in a manner that is true, accurate, and in accordance with applicable law.

**9.7 Specialization.** Marriage and family therapists represent themselves as providing specialized services only after taking reasonable steps to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients, supervisees, and others from harm.

**9.8 Correction of Misinformation.** Marriage and family therapists correct, wherever possible, false, misleading, or inaccurate information and representations made by others concerning the therapist's qualifications, services, or products.